Division of Academic Affairs
Diversity Task Force
March 10, 2011
3:00-5:00
President’s Conference Room, Green Hall

Meeting Notes

Present: Donald DeHayes, Laura Beauvais, Gerald Williams, Trish Morokoff, Anita Derreza, Naomi Ramos-DeSimone, Dania Brandford-Calvo, Earl Smith III, Raymond Watson, Alycia Mosely Austin, Cheryl Wilga.

Discussion: What two to three issues do we want to work on this year? The task force participated in a brainstorming session on the first two issues. We will discuss the third issue at our next meeting on April 12th, 3-4:30 PM, in the President’s Conference Room in Green Hall.

Overview: What actions might the task force take this year to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus, particularly within academic affairs?

1. In what manner could or should the academic community, including faculty and administration, formally acknowledge and recognize faculty activities in the areas of teaching, research and scholarship, and service that directly and effectively address diversity, equity, and multiculturalism at URI and beyond?

- Faculty can write narratives in the promotion and tenure materials regarding how they serve diverse populations (e.g., raise funds, provide scholarships and other opportunities for underrepresented students, etc.)
- Better publicity of the work that faculty perform in community, diversity, and equity
- Add performance on community, diversity, and equity issues as a fourth component to teaching, scholarship and research, and service performance expectations of faculty
- Workload statements are not aligned with promotion and tenure expectations. If we want to enhance faculty participation in community, diversity and equity work, then it has to be acknowledged and given credit in department workload statements
- Faculty can examine diverse sources of knowledge and research methodologies in their scholarship as a way to contribute to community, diversity, and equity work
- Present a consistent message on “community, diversity, and equity” similar to the “Think Big, We Do” brand
In letters of appointment for all faculty hires, add expectations in multiculturalism, diversity, and equity work and evaluate subsequent performance against these expectations. (See suggested statement below to add to appointment letters.)

It was suggested that we add a statement to the faculty and staff review process that highlights the importance of diversity work to the University. Such a statement for the faculty might be the following: "Consistent with the President’s vision and the goals in the Academic Plan, meaningful and explicit contributions that advance multiculturalism, diversity, and equity as part of a faculty’s teaching, research and scholarship, and/or service are especially valued. Demonstrated commitment to this work is shown by providing evidence that support the impact or outcomes of this work."

Engage the Faculty Senate and add language to the University Manual that indicates that multiculturalism, diversity, and equity work is valued in faculty performance. The Student Senate leadership is taking a significant role in promoting this work and so should the Faculty Senate. Can this issue be a topic of discussion with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting with the Provost?

In addition to developing the above language to add to the University Manual, to appointment letters, and to the faculty review process, we need to develop a strategy to promote this work.

2. **What incentives might be created (or disincentives might be removed) to support faculty that make meaningful contributions in diversity, equity, and multiculturalism on campus?**

- Provide mini-grants to faculty to develop courses
- Model a “Distinguished Multicultural Scholars” program after “Distinguished International Visiting Scholars” program
- Start Multicultural Fellows Program similar to fellows program with John Hazen White Sr. Center for Ethics and Public Service
- Award teaching assistantships to faculty who participate in community, diversity, and equity work
- Allocate a certain percentage of assistantships to diverse students (CELS)
- Re-design courses to infuse multicultural content throughout the curriculum
- We need to be careful of providing monetary incentives for every good deed
- Provide travel funds to faculty who have supported diverse students in their research
- Encourage junior faculty to get involved in service activities associated with community, diversity, and equity issues
- Discourage the “culture of mentoring” junior faculty from participating in services work, maybe especially among faculty of color
- Eliminate bias of those who make decisions on workload assignments and performance
- Visit other institutions to see how community, diversity, and equity are infused in the curriculum, especially in disciplines where this infusion may seem difficult
- Initiate Diversity Teaching Fellows Program, similar to Online Teaching Fellows Program
- Pull faculty together to share ideas and experiences regarding community, diversity, and equity with regard to philosophy, methodologies, language, culture, race, ethnicity, etc.

3. **How might we better communicate with colleges and departments to help them incorporate the multicultural competencies we developed last year in their work?**

   This topic was postponed until next meeting